



# If Not Now, When?

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The burgeoning field of Refugee, Migration, and Displacement Studies has documented in great detail that displaced people face disproportionate educational, economic, and political barriers—whether in transit, in camps, or after resettling. Our community of academics can agree on defining these challenges, at least in broad strokes. Indeed, we know enough about the scope and challenges that forced migration and displacement present to our world to advance a simple but ambitious question: What comes next?

Our undergraduate students ask the same question: What do we do now? Their syllabi are crammed with devastating, critical analyses of the myriad ways in which our societies sit on dense layers of social and economic precarity, felt to varying degrees across politicized identities. Students often reach the end of the semester exhausted, spit out of their

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warp-speed guided tours of everything wrong with the world, sometimes with little guidance on how things might be done differently. Their clamor for creative, practical solutions is understandable. After all, their generation is coming of age in a time when the issue of global displacement is becoming ever more urgent. As engaged citizens and future leaders, they will have to act bravely and quickly to lessen the human costs of forced migration.

Many academics, NGOs, and civil society actors see forced migration as a generation-defining issue at a moment in history when closing boundaries are threatening to destabilize our hard-won spirit of global cooperation and knowledge sharing. Thus, confronting forced migration requires nothing less than a creative, daring rethinking of higher education curricula and modes of operating.

In assembling this collection, we were encouraged by previous scholarly efforts to shape public discourse about migration and to imagine institutional growth at the university level. Our work these past years as founding members of the Consortium on Forced Migration, Displacement, and Education (CFMDE), funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, emboldened the vision for this essay collection. Collaboration and the joining of intellectual and material resources to address this generational challenge is at the heart of this project, as is the call to broaden our predominant focus on theory by considering a rigorous engagement with action. The moment is right for a pedagogical toolkit like this book, with practical examples of community-engaged learning, written in a style engaging to students and instructors alike.<sup>1</sup>

The authors of the following chapters could not agree more. They offer thoughtful, compelling models of how colleges and universities can respond to the challenges posed by forced migration. They marshal the traditional resources of higher education—the syllabus, the major, minor, or certificate, the publications and research—while asking readers to think creatively about other resources: the physical space of campus; the bonds of solidarity among students, faculty, and community members; the opportunity for transnational exchanges assisted by technology. Put

<sup>1</sup> A wealth of books has been published about the global phenomenon, and even an array of works on what forced migration means for higher education, but less attention has been devoted to pedagogy. See, for example, *Refugees in Higher Education: Debate, Discourse and Practice* (Stevenson and Baker, 2018), *Refugees and Higher Education: Transnational Perspectives on Access, Equity, and Internationalization* (Lykes, Aker, Aksoz Efe, et al. 2020), and *Opening Up the University: Teaching and Learning with Refugees* (Cantat, Cook, Rajaram, 2022).

simply, these essays represent the ideas and texts we've wanted to assign in our own classes.

With a focus on undergraduate education at U.S.-based institutions, this collection nonetheless draws breadth from those institutions' transnational partnerships with universities, research centers, and NGOs that might not previously have been on their radar. The curricular models presented here were developed with partners in Palestine, Kenya, Jordan, Switzerland, Greece, Rwanda, Germany, Djibouti, Indonesia, and elsewhere. While our contributors address the global challenges of forced migration in ways that transcend national boundaries, they also insist that attention be paid to the particularities of each local context. We are all concerned with how status, right to remain, access to forms of education, cultural sensitivities affecting curriculum, technical infrastructure, and more, differ across space, time, and politicized identities. These essays stress the impact of national policies but also highlight how local, community-engaged action, informed by deep engagement with the burgeoning scholarship on migration and displacement, can make the commitments and promises of the Liberal Arts newly relevant.

But first, some global context. Forced displacement, as we currently understand it, is not a new challenge. Even if we limit our scope of inquiry to after the rise of the modern nation-state, history is marked by examples of individuals, families, and whole communities being forced from their homes. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), founded in 1950, has defined refugees as "people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country." Many—if not most—of the people currently displaced around the world lack that formal legal status and the accompanying rights and protections afforded under international law. By the end of 2021, there were 26.6 million refugees, and more than 84 million individuals designated as Internally Displaced People, according to UNHCR.<sup>2</sup>

We, and many of the authors in this collection, use the terms "forced migration" and "displacement" in a broader sense than does UNHCR. We do this to encompass a fuller range of people compelled to leave their homes—by, for example, gender-based violence or climate change. Our definition includes, but is not limited to, the legal definitions of "refugee"

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, "Figures at a Glance," <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>, last accessed April 2, 2022.

or “asylum seeker.” Many essays in this collection challenge or expand upon the existing language of forced migration and displacement, asking us to reconsider *all* forces that compel people to flee.

This wider understanding of displacement compels us also to deconstruct the prevailing language of “crisis” in much political and public discourse about migration. Photographs from the Sonoran Desert and the Mediterranean Sea caught the attention of Western eyes in 2014-15, for example, but forced displacement and migrant deaths have been happening in those places and others for decades. Because so much of global migration is Global South to Global South, it does not get as much attention in the U.S. and the Global North as it warrants.<sup>3</sup> We, the editors, aware of displacement as an enduring global issue, began to ramp up efforts in curricular innovation in the last few years, so that we, as teachers and educators, can effectively prepare our students to meet this global challenge. We share an understanding that insofar that migration is a crisis, it is a crisis of past and present policy, especially in the Global North. We specifically point to the reverberations of colonial policy, economic inequality between hemispheres, and the North’s disproportionate responsibility for global warming.

Unfortunately, we are all quite familiar by now with the Global North’s pattern of selective welcoming of refugees and asylum seekers. The most recent (at the time of this writing) crisis of forced displacement of millions of people was impelled by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. While, in some instances, there have been inspiring examples of hospitality and solidarity, that conflict has also exposed contradictions and inequities along racial, ethnic, and geographical lines. European countries, once ambivalent or even deliberately obstructive to the resettlement of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, or Eritrea, are now eager to embrace Ukrainian refugees. Americans who clamored for a wall high enough to keep out migrants entering through Mexico are now competing to stand in solidarity with refugees from Ukraine. Even within the growing numbers of people displaced from Ukraine, we have seen sharply unequal treatment. Citizens, visitors, and exchange students of color who fled alongside

<sup>3</sup>The World Bank provides exhaustive data from 1960 until 2020 in “Refugee population by country or territory of asylum,” World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POP.REFG?end=2020&start=1960>; last accessed 11 April 2022.

their neighbors have often been denied the warm, fraternal embrace that white Ukrainians received.<sup>4</sup>

The challenge for us as educators is to explore with our students the reality that displacement does not only happen “over there,” to “other people,” as was the dominant framing of the 2014–2015 refugee “crises” in Europe and Central America. Mass migrations and governmental policies put in place to control them, in the end, affect all of us. In the U.S., for example, about 200 million people—two of every three Americans—live within 100 miles of a border, the area where the U.S. Border Patrol can operate. A traffic stop, public school enrollment, a lease application, or a job interview can be sites of bordering practices. Borders get pushed inside frontiers, and they also become stretched beyond them: they are internalized and externalized. Across the Atlantic, FRONTEX is a case in point. Europe’s control of migration has pushed boundaries outside the continent, because European tax money is paying countries—some with dubious human rights records—hefty sums to prevent migrants from reaching European shores.<sup>5</sup> We should point out that, while Europe’s boundaries are being pushed out beyond the continent, EU laws and human rights protections do not travel with them, in an echo of earlier colonial policies.

So how do we as educators prepare students for this new reality? How do we respond to their questions of “Now What?” in the face of such traumatic upheavals and suffering? Universities and colleges in the U.S., but also in Turkey and Mexico, have stepped up to such challenges in the past by hosting scholars and students from Nazi Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe.<sup>6</sup> Hungarians fleeing Soviet persecution after the 1956 revolution and Soviet Jews fleeing anti-Semitism during the 1980s also were able to build life anew in universities in Europe and the U.S. Today,

<sup>4</sup> Peter Gatrell, “Europe, the ‘Dark Continent,’ Is the Stage for Another Great Migration,” *New York Times*, Opinion, March 14, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/14/opinion/ukraine-refugees-europe.html?referringSource=articleShare>

<sup>5</sup> On Frontex, see: Isabel Hilpert, “The Externalization of Border Control and the Dynamism between the European Center and the European Peripheries,” *EuropeNow* 46 (February 2022), <https://www.europenowjournal.org/2022/01/30/the-externalization-of-border-control-and-the-dynamism-between-the-european-center-and-the-european-peripheries/>.

<sup>6</sup> The Colegio de México, now one of Mexico’s most important universities, for example, was founded by European refugees in 1938–40. For more information on this history, see “La historia de El Colegio de México,” Colegio de México, <https://www.colmex.mx/historia>, last accessed April 9, 2022.

with the support of Scholars At Risk and the Institute of International Education-Scholars Rescue Fund, colleges and universities have taken such steps in the wake of the Syrian civil war. According to IIE documentation, the five countries that hosted the most refugee scholars in 2021 were the U.S., Egypt, Canada, Jordan, and the UK. Refugee scholars have also been hosted by universities in Malaysia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Iraqi Kurdistan, Colombia, Chile, and the United Arab Emirates.<sup>7</sup> Many schools are now working feverishly to address the anticipated displacement of scholars from Eastern Europe and Russia.

The academy's past interventions inspired some of our own schools to welcome refugee students and faculty. Yet it is also important to acknowledge how the context of today's engagement has shifted. Educators concerned with the challenges posed by displacement are no longer thinking of ad hoc responses to isolated crises or the rescue of individual scholars or students. Indeed, the twenty-first-century classroom demands coordinated, ongoing efforts to overcome systemic challenges such as global displacement on this scale. Additionally, our students are voicing new concerns. Our classrooms are international; diverse viewpoints animate discussion, and many students bring direct experiences of displacement to bear on their contributions. Students make poignant requests to decolonize the curriculum, calling to account both the subjects and methods of analysis, which often reflect historical inequities—and can and should be repurposed to instead change the balance of power.

Migrant knowledges are integral to the intellectual life of the university, especially at a time when institutions are decolonizing their curricula. Migrant knowledges demand that we ask difficult questions about infrastructure, interrogating how educational spaces and material resources are distributed. Moreover, this effort calls upon us to reach beyond the campus for insight and solidarity. The challenge of rethinking the curriculum has compelled us and many of our contributors to strengthen connections to local communities. It goes without saying that these connections are guided by the principles of equity and reciprocity; the label “service learning” does not suffice to describe what might better be characterized as horizontal partnerships. We understand these shared efforts as beyond mere do-gooderism.

<sup>7</sup> Institute for International Education, “Scholar Rescue Fund—About Us,” <https://www.scholarrescuefund.org/about-us/videos/>, last accessed April 3, 2022.

As we, the editors, were thinking through how to structure our own efforts, we thought that we could not be the only ones weighing these questions. Indeed, we were delighted to find fellow travelers along the way, creative and engaged pedagogues who introduced us to a broad range of projects. We present a sampling of some of the most innovative work to spark conversation among like-minded colleagues on how we can live up to the values we declare so often in the name of the Liberal Arts. We were thrilled to learn about, and learn from, the work being done by this book's wide range of contributors: students, researchers, educators, and people affected by displacement.

The essays collected here are meant to be a living volume—a grouping of insights and inspirations that can help educators and students alike to create effective, impactful ways to get engaged, or deepen one's engagement, with the challenge of forced migration. Many of these innovative interventions were made possible on shoestring budgets, or outside traditional avenues of university support. Their authors all insist that the undergraduate liberal arts classroom is an untapped well of competence that can be drawn on when existing competencies and expertise are overdrawn, or sluggish in responding. Our contributors come from a broad range of disciplines, including STEM and pre-professional fields: Law, Languages and Literatures, Medical Anthropology, Classics, Architecture, Computer Science, Geography, Linguistics, Film, Education, Biology, Psychology, and History. To enhance this collection, we also privileged projects that were daring in breaking down deeply embedded disciplinary boundaries.

As we noted above, the innovative curricula presented here all foreground horizontal relationships between teacher and student, campus and public, researcher and affected community. They model how community-engaged liberal arts and sciences classes may involve varied activities, but all emphasize reflective learning and go beyond the traditional "service" model. The crucial point to drive home to students is that new knowledge is not produced only by the customary forms of research and theorizing to which they are exposed in most postsecondary classes. Let us be clear: we do not reject critical theories and analyses. To the contrary, the reader will find the following pages full of carefully sharpened critiques of the status quo. Each essay in this collection frames its central problem with critical analysis, in order to explore the solution(s) the author or authors identify. Each contribution then moves to its main point: exploring how faculty, students, and staff can make a real difference in the lives of people who have been forced to migrate.

One of the key challenges for the editors of a collection such as this is to guide the interested reader in navigating essays from a variety of disciplines—and in this case, across the globe. The organizational structure we chose is by no means the only logical one, but it helped us as we conceptualized this book.

In our first section, “Language, Representation, Imagination,” contributors feature the imaginative expression of displaced people, bringing together educators and artists who reflect upon new directions for translation, literature, and the arts. In “A Developing Community of Collaboration in Indiana,” linguist Kelly H. Berkson and her collaborators James C. Wamsley, Samson Lotven, Shobhana Chelliah, Kenneth Van Bik, Sara Champlin, Kimberly Sakhong, Sui Hnem Par, Alina Matthews, and Amanda Bohnert from Indiana University illustrate the close collaboration among researchers, graduate students, undergraduate students, and the Chin refugee community in Bloomington, IN, to impart contextualized, transferable scientific training while also fostering meaningful connections between refugee community members and linguists-in-training eager to make their work matter.

An essay by Brittany Murray, at the University of Tennessee, “Learning Together: Exploring Visual and Textual Narration with Students Affected by Forced Migration,” deals with a class she taught at Vassar College in Summer 2019 to a group of 18 high school students with forced migration backgrounds. A French Studies professor, her course focused on transitions—whether those transitions referred to adolescence or migration—through a variety of visual and textual media. A different kind of learning with, and from, displaced individuals is described by Noura Hajjaj, who teaches communications at SUNY New Paltz. In “Global Cultural Exchange, Women’s Leadership, and Advocacy: Connecting the Hudson Valley and the Gaza Strip through WhatsApp,” Hajjaj discusses how she connects American students with young female students in Gaza *and* provides a toolkit for educators who want to explore similar opportunities for their campuses. Virginia Krause’s “*Refugees and Forced Migration: An Engaged Humanities Course in French and Francophone Studies*” shows how she adapted a course with a broad humanities frame (literary studies, history, philosophy, cinema, and anthropology) by forming a partnership with Women’s Refugee Care, an NGO created to support refugees from central Africa resettled in Providence, RI, home to Brown University, where Krause teaches.



The second section, “Law and Policy in Action,” explores innovative learning models developed in response to federal, state, and local policies that affect people experiencing forced migration. These authors choose particular policies to reframe or challenge, and describe how undergraduates can provide concrete assistance to affected communities of displaced people. In “Education Can’t Wait for LGBTIQ Refugees? Exploring Inclusion and Access to Higher Education in Kakuma Refugee Camp,” Djemila Carron, professor in the Department of Law at the University of Quebec in Montreal, and Paul O’Keeffe, an interdisciplinary specialist in development, migration, and refugee studies at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, outline how higher education can reach across boundaries—of nations and camps—to provide in-demand human rights law education to refugees that directly addresses their environment and needs. In “Migration, Death, and Disappearance: Education and Engagement in Tucson, Arizona,” Robin Reineke, Assistant Research Social Scientist at the University of Arizona’s Southwest Center, and Bruce Anderson, Forensic Anthropologist for the Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner in Tucson, AZ, discuss their experience teaching forensic anthropology students about the invisibilized deaths caused by U.S. border policy that pushes migrants into the Sonoran Desert to cross the border; their work includes how to return remains to families.

In “Teaching Undergraduate Forced Migration Studies through a Community-based Law and Policy Clinic during Covid: What Are the Crises and Opportunities?” Doug Smith, Lecturer in Legal Studies at Brandeis University, writes with student Alejandro Bracamontes, a DOJ-accredited representative and the Executive Director of The Right to Immigration Institute (TRII), about their immigration law clinic—in particular, their efforts to continue work throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and shutdown. Next is “Court Interpretation, or Ganas Goes Legit” by Jonathan Pitcher, who teaches Spanish at Bennington College. Pitcher reflects on a course he teaches that prepares students to become certified Spanish-English interpreters, who can responsibly transmit migrants’ ideas and needs to officials with whom they come in contact, particularly during times of heightened stress, such as medical emergencies, police interactions, or court hearings. This section concludes with “Searching for Safety and Researching for Justice: Documenting Migrant Experiences in the Paso del Norte Border Region” by Jeremy Slack and Neil Harvey, from the Sociology and Anthropology Departments at the University of Texas at El Paso. Together with their former students Nancy Mateo, Zaira

Martin, Kathryn Garcia, Alondra Aca Garcia, Daniel Avitia, and Ava McElhone Yates, they describe a summer research program that investigates new forms of state-sanctioned violence in the Paso del Norte region in partnership with local activists who respond to these policies.

The third section, “Reimagining Space and Spaces,” highlights rethinking our relationships to the built environment and imagining new approaches to architecture, urban planning, geography, and design, informed by the perspectives of displaced people. When conceptualizing space and belonging for those affected by forced migration, the temptation is to look “over there,” beyond the walls of our campuses or even beyond the U.S. However, the effects of forced migration hit close to home and can reshape familiar spaces. Ayham Dalal, a Palestinian architect from Jordan, then at the Technische Universität Berlin, now at the Université de Poitiers challenges his own field in “Lessons Learned from Refugee Camps: From Fetishizing Design to Researching, Drawing, and Co-Producing.” Dalal worked on-location in Jordan and Berlin to develop appropriate housing for refugees. He combines knowledge gleaned on-site with experience, adapting this model to an undergraduate, virtual course at Vassar College. Kostis Kourelis, who teaches in the Classics Department at Franklin & Marshall College, offers a discussion of the process of decolonizing the syllabus and critiquing exclusionary ideologies dormant in the humanities. In his article, “The Archaeology of Forced Migration in Greece: A Layered Pedagogy,” Kourelis describes taking his students to Greece to explore archeological sites of past displacements, in whose vicinity are now housed refugees of the Syrian and Afghan wars.

Brian Tomaszewski, a computer science professor at the Rochester Institute of Technology, describes his multilayered collaboration with refugees, NGOs, and corporate funders to teach GIS mapping to displaced individuals in Jordan and Rwanda. In “Teaching Forced Displacement with Geospatial Technology in Refugee Camps: Lessons from Rwanda and Jordan,” he describes why local actors and voices are so important if learned skills are to persist beyond a particular project. We close this section with Joseph Nevins, Professor of Geography at Vassar College, and his thought-provoking discussion, “On the Pedagogical Value of Not Going There: Mobility, Fossil Fuel Consumption, and the Production of Refugees.” Having taught the challenges of migration and displacement by visiting heavily policed borderlands, as well as refugee camps and detention centers, Nevins urges us to take a different route. He suggests that the exercise of *immobility* can also help students and faculty to challenge

the socio-ecological inequities that limit the mobility of refugees and other people on the move.

Contesting the notion that inclusion is a courtesy uniquely extended from host to guest, our fourth section, “Belonging and Inclusion,” presents inclusion as a relationship forged through collaboration and reciprocity. Local knowledges and voices are foregrounded, as contributors critically reconsider who shapes the boundaries of belonging. Building new foundations of community can be challenging in settings marked by historical inequality, and each author examines these challenges lucidly while offering best practices gleaned from experience. The essays here introduce creative and inspiring models for inclusion, drawing from resources across the curriculum in the sciences, the humanities, and the arts. Diya Abdo, Professor of English at Guilford College, presents her award-winning project in “Teaching Tragedy: Towards a Pedagogy of Accountability—The Every Campus a Refugee Model.” She details how colleges can be places of refugee resettlement, describing how she built a program of engaged work and study designed to transcend poverty tourism and the spectacle of tragedy, focusing instead upon prioritizing hosted refugees’ agency, privacy, and dignity. “The Power of Participatory and Immersive Filmmaking” is written by Peter Decherney, Professor of Film at the University of Pennsylvania, who has been taking his students to Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, where they partnered with refugees to create virtual reality films. This essay explores changing the narratives of forced migration with new technologies, but also testifies to the value of well-considered partnerships among faculty, students, and displaced individuals.

In another essay on the complexities of horizontal partnerships with displaced individuals and communities, Vassar College students Aena Khan, Faith Northern, Sofia Rao, and Adam Weil (writing with their professor, Maria Hantzopoulos) reflect on a planned study trip to Athens, Greece, to work with educators at an informal school for refugees. Covid-19 derailed their planned trip to Greece, but the students discuss in “Finding Place: Strengthening Pedagogical Practices on Forced Migration Through Interpersonal Understanding in Higher Education” how they used digital tools to keep the partnership productive and describe the virtual workshops they designed for educators of refugees. Next, Jodi Schwarz, Professor of Biology at Vassar College, explores inclusion and belonging based on her own work on making STEM fields more hospitable to traditionally marginalized student populations. Her “Climate

Change, Human Displacement, and STEM Education: Toward a More Transdisciplinary and Inclusive Culture of Science” offers new approaches to bridge STEM fields and the humanities more generally, including by prompting students to work with, and learn from, displaced populations. The final essay in this section comes from Alberto Gelmi, Professor of Italian at Vassar College, and Halima Akhlaqi, a former educator in Cisarua Refugee Learning Centre. In “Reading Eveline in Jakarta: Community Learning with Hazara Refugees,” the two discuss their work at Cisarua, where they led literary study with refugee students and conducted professional-development workshops with educators of refugees. They demonstrate the value, and surprising insights, that emerge from deep engagement with the humanities and Liberal Arts.

In our fifth and final section, “Trauma, Memory, Postmemory, Healing,” the authors confront the damage displacement causes to communities—damage that often requires time and multifaceted, multimedia approaches to heal. The essays in this section argue that oral histories, photography, new approaches to historical study, and a wholesale reframing of mental health care in the context of forced migration can explain and treat the trauma of displacement. Heather N. Stone, an educator and oral historian at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, illustrates in “Place-Conscious Education: Teaching Displacement Using Oral Histories in Virtual Reality” the double displacement of native peoples, first by encroaching nineteenth-century white settlers and then by rising sea levels. She shows how virtual reality can be effectively used to turn middle school students into active researchers on the disappearing coastline of Louisiana, and the impact of global warming on the Tribe of the Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw who live on the Isle de Jean Charles. Adam Brown, Director of the Trauma and Global Mental Health Lab at The New School, and Alexa Elias, a master’s student in global mental health at King’s College London, explore the productive intersection between humanities scholarship and mental health research in their chapter, “Learning at the Borders: How an Experiential Learning Course in Bern, Switzerland, Transformed Undergraduate Learning about Memory, Mental Health, and Displacement.” Building upon research about the importance of autobiographical memories and self-narratives, Brown and Elias explain what undergraduate students and researchers from the New School and elsewhere are learning about how intergenerational memories can help families to heal the trauma of forced displacement.

Matthew Brill-Carlat and Maria Höhn write about their experience teaching a class with seven Vassar College students and six refugee students who had recently been resettled in Berlin, Germany, in “Rebuilding After War and Genocide: Learning With and From Refugees in the Transnational Digital Classroom.” Taught in 2018, the class mobilized two of the big lessons of postwar European history—that rebuilding a war-torn country *is* possible and that there *is* precedent for European countries, Germany included, welcoming large numbers of refugees in the past—to educate and energize the students in Berlin and Poughkeepsie alike. Höhn and Brill-Carlat discuss the possibilities that the transnational digital seminar offers to a rapidly shifting higher education landscape. Nathalie Peutz, in “Small Things,” describes an experiential-learning course that she led with students from NYU Abu Dhabi and Yemeni students resettled in the Markazi refugee camp in Djibouti, including a collaborative photography project documenting daily life in Markazi. Her contribution movingly documents the complex outcomes of such a project, as NYU Abu Dhabi students and Markazi participants reflect upon the value, and the inequities, of transnational partnerships and on-site learning together.

### LESSONS LEARNED, QUESTIONS ASKED

As broad and diverse as these innovative community-engaged classes and projects of our contributors are, and no matter whether they were implemented in the United States or abroad, or whether they were concerned with the law, space, language, or memory and trauma, all brought forth key lessons that we believe will prove helpful to pedagogues and students alike. All contributors urged us to reconsider critically where we teach, where the academy’s boundaries are drawn, and how technology is changing that understanding. Their contributions spark lively dialogue about the value of travel, the ethical case for refraining from travel, the mixed effects of bringing together students and refugees in camps, and the possibilities for digitally enabled hybrid courses.

In other words, should students studying forced migration “go there”? As Joseph Nevins argues in his chapter, the “hypermobility enjoyed by some—not least academics and students at well-resourced institutions—is related to the highly constrained mobility of others.” The use of money and fossil fuels to give students “on-the-ground” experience, he says, can wind up “effectively ‘teaching’ students that the exercise of hypermobility

and the consumption of a disproportionate share of the world's resources are justifiable in the pursuit of knowledge." The hypermobility of wealthy Western communities is, of course, one major factor in global border regimes and rising climate change.

On the other hand, Nathalie Peutz suggests that stepping onto a plane and into another community can have unexpected and pedagogically transformative consequences. When she took her students to a refugee camp in Djibouti, she found that their refugee interlocutors "converted what I had planned as a fairly sober course (with far too much reading) into intimate, social encounters: ones in which the refugees were not the subjects of our lessons, but our teachers and our hosts." Being physically present—invited to gatherings and into homes—allowed her to cede more pedagogical control than would have been possible in a remote-learning course. Put another way, teaching in-person opened up the class to benefit more from migrant knowledges, a theme we touch on below.

Ayham Dalal offers a third assessment of the complications of working on-site with displaced individuals and communities. He demands a rethinking of the discipline of architecture—including more research and reflection—and a reorientation of a common designer mentality in the context of refugee housing in camps. That is, he highlights the fruits of designing with humility, and accounting for what refugees want and need, rather than working solely from what an NGO or camp authorities deem necessary. Djemila Carron and Paul O'Keeffe point the way to a hybrid model, with visits by instructors at the beginning and end of a term, and digital connections during the semester. The in-person visits to students in Kakuma Refugee Camp, the authors found, enriched the experience for instructors and students alike and built the foundation on which ensuing weeks of remote learning rested.

The debate over whether or not to "go there" intersects with the question we raised about where forced migration happens. Many of our contributors work in regions that are directly affected. Bruce Anderson and Robin Reineke discuss training students to reunite families with the remains of their loved ones who died crossing from Mexico to the U.S. These deaths are often made invisible; part of their pedagogical work is teaching students to understand the consequences of U.S. immigration policy that happen all around them. College campuses situated far from ports of entry can be focal points for engaged study of, and response to, forced migration. Diya Abdo writes about the Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR) initiative, which she founded at Guilford College to welcome

newly arrived refugees. Colleges and universities have housing, Wi-Fi, career counselors, and other resources that can be put to work to welcome refugees as they arrive in the United States. ECAR turns the typical model of community-engaged courses on its head; as Abdo writes, “students are no longer going out there; rather, we are bringing the community into our space, thus reframing for whom campus space can and should be used. And rather than a testing or training ground for our students, our community partners are co-educators and co-trainers.”

Altogether, our contributors demonstrate the myriad ways that faculty and students are re-conceptualizing the space of the campus and of forced migration. From Jonathan Pitcher’s essay about interpretation services for migrant workers in rural Vermont, to Virginia Krause’s work with refugee communities in Providence, RI, our contributors show that work with forced migration can be done in urban and rural settings. As shown by the Boston-area legal clinic described by Doug Smith and Alejandro Bracamontes, students need not travel to a border to intervene on behalf of migrants; sometimes they just have to walk a couple blocks beyond their campus.

For years, liberal arts institutions have pondered how to develop the new community-engaged and social justice classes students have been clamoring for. The multifaceted challenge of forced migration offers educators rich opportunities to overcome boundaries between on-campus and off-campus study, disciplines, and undergraduate and graduate students. Adam Brown’s work with mental health researchers and undergraduate liberal arts students and Kelly Berkson et al.’s collaboration between undergraduate and graduate students demonstrate that the undergraduate classroom can be a source of technical competence and pedagogical innovation that can then be taken outside the classroom. Peter Decherney joined film students from the University of Pennsylvania with filmmakers in Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee camps to produce groundbreaking VR and 360 degree films. Heather Stone used VR technology to connect her students with indigenous communities and local middle school classrooms.

The essays in this collection also upend assumptions about who teaches and who learns in inspiring, and often unexpected, ways. They challenge the received wisdom of pedagogues in the Global North. These cooperative relationships offered genuine surprises and productive challenges, even to beliefs adopted with the best of intentions. The organizers of the New Americans Summer Program, described in this volume by Brittany Murray, had initial doubts about the name. Would it be received as

patronizing? Does the nomenclature center U.S. identity at the expense of cultural and linguistic pluralism? Is the title inaccurate for participants who hail from Central or South America? Students, however, explained that they liked the name; for them, it signaled inclusivity, and a marker of their new life. Gelmi and Akhlaqi struggled with similar anxieties in deciding an appropriate text to read with their students. They were just as surprised as Murray when their students in Indonesia insisted on reading a Western text because they thought it most helpful to prepare them for future resettlement abroad. Höhn and her American students learned valuable lessons from their refugee partners about the limits of what they considered universal visual signifiers of the Holocaust.

While it is important to advance with humility, it is equally important to steadfastly pursue projects that refugees themselves identify as urgent. Taking her students to a camp in Djibouti, Nathalie Peutz was understandably anxious about whether this experience held any benefit for the refugees themselves. One of the refugees assured her that the encounter with the NYU students mattered in “things small and large.” What may have seemed a small thing to Peutz and her students, was large to some of the refugees—namely that the students’ time in the camp reminded their refugee interlocutors that the world had not forgotten them. These examples remind us that our strength as educators is not simply determined by our curriculum content, but by the quality of relationships forged as we teach.

### SOME FINAL WORDS

We hope that this first effort to gather scholars, educators, and activists represented here, will initiate a conversation on the need to rethink curricula and practices if educators are to address forced migration. In this spirit, we feature the Selective Bibliography of Forced Migration, <http://forcedmigrationbib.vassarspaces.net/>, a student-driven, faculty-mentored project that has blossomed into an expansive, innovative open-source toolkit, a living resource that complements this book.<sup>8</sup> Inspired by the

<sup>8</sup>Selective Bibliography of Forced Migration, <http://forcedmigrationbib.vassarspaces.net/>, last accessed April 11, 2022. For a description of this project, see Elijah Appelson, Matthew Brill-Carlat, Samantha Cavagnolo, Violet Cenedella, Angie Diaz, Kaiya John, Naima Nader, and Haru Sugishita, “A Selective Bibliography of Forced Migration: Resources for A New Generation of Discourse,” *EuropeNow* 36 (August 2020), <https://www.europenowjournal.org/2020/10/11/a-selective-bibliography-of-forced-migration-resources-for-a-new-generation-of-discourse/>.



Charleston syllabus, which facilitated a nationwide conversation about racism and anti-racism, the Selective Bibliography, a work in progress, aspires to join a similarly far-reaching conversation about migration and displacement.<sup>9</sup> The bibliography began with Brittany Murray's work with Vassar students, and it has truly blossomed as a result of student ingenuity and perseverance, growing into a repository of ideas for advancing study and teaching models. The bibliography, though still expanding, already offers a wealth of accessible readings, lesson plans, and audiovisual resources for the classroom and beyond. The bibliography depends on community contributions to remain a living and evolving resource, and the founders extend an open invitation to educators, students, and engaged readers to share their own research and extend the invitation, in turn, to other schools. Tell us what you know!

In the process of devising new classes and learning from other educators, all of us have learned the importance of humility. Enthusiasm for student work must be paired with careful planning and reflection on how our institutions can serve displaced individuals and communities with whom we partner. Brill-Carlat has written elsewhere, "we must guard against the dangers of an educational politics of shallow engagement and diversity-as-educational-device. If students think that merely being in the same room as someone who has experienced displacement confers an instantaneous understanding of what that person needs from college programming around forced migration and displacement—and the right to post on LinkedIn about working with refugees—it is unlikely that a program of true value" will ever emerge.<sup>10</sup>

Shifting how, where, what, and whom our institutions teach cannot be a cosmetic change. It takes real, hard work to listen to partners—be they scholars from other countries, students in Berlin appearing on a projector screen in Poughkeepsie, or filmmakers and law students in Kakuma refugee camp—and make a clear-eyed assessment of possible shared goals and projects. It requires reinventing the academy's traditional hierarchies and one-way knowledge flows. Only then can we create badly needed democratic and equitable relations between people and societies, and more

<sup>9</sup> Keisha N. Blain, Melissa Morrone, Ryan P. Randall, Cecily Walker, Chad Williams and Kidada Williams. "#Charlestonsyllabus." *AAIHS*, 19 June 2015, <https://www.aaihs.org/resources/charlestonsyllabus/>, last accessed May 15, 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew Brill-Carlat, "Forced Migration, Student Responses, and the Liberal Arts," *EuropeNow* 25 (March 2019), <https://www.europenowjournal.org/2019/03/04/forced-migration-student-responses-and-the-liberal-arts/>.

sustainable ways of living that allow people to stay in their homes if they choose, and the resources to make home anew when necessary.

Radically rethinking whom, what, where, and how we teach is no act of charity, but rather an investment in a partnership that will fulfill the educational aims of everyone involved. Indeed, valuing knowledge held by displaced people shakes up humanitarian structures that pigeonhole displaced people as powerless subjects who rely on the stream of material goods and knowledge that Western countries and NGOs aim indiscriminately at neighborhoods and camps. Those who are more fortunate have an obligation to help by providing material goods and/or academic training, but we should not delude ourselves that partnering with displaced people only benefits them.

If colleges and universities wish to retain their claim to intellectual leadership of civil society during this fraught time, there is much to be done. We believe that a considered institutional response to forced migration, including curriculum development, will allow universities to position their students and graduates to thrive in fields that displacement will shape for decades. In order to make this change—and a convincing argument for continued relevance—the academy must open itself to reward unconventional teaching and projects. The current incentive structures for promotion and prestige are at loggerheads with the centuries-long history of the university as a place of refuge and innovation. We must re-examine the largely twentieth-century model of our institutions with fresh, twenty-first-century eyes.

The next big challenge will be to transform our institutions to make cementing and scaling up this work more feasible. Our most satisfying accomplishments have been produced by fully embedding student activism and faculty leadership in the curriculum (see: <https://migration-displacement.vassar.edu/>). Left alone in the shifting (not to mention oft-ignored) landscape of extracurricular ventures, there are currently few ways to develop and institutionalize worthy projects. Everything about the way we do business will have to change: how community-engaged work is incentivized in promotion and hiring structures, where a college chooses to draw the outermost boundary of its campus and its student body, and more. Perhaps now is the time to explore how digital features can enhance curriculum and make coursework accessible to an expanded community of learners. Now is absolutely the time to strengthen partnerships among institutions—large universities, small liberal arts colleges, community colleges, grassroots organizations—to scale up impact.

When we started this book, none of us could have imagined that a new crisis of mass displacement would be unfolding as Ukrainians flee the Russian invasion of February 2022. Forced migration and displacement are truly global challenges; higher education must do its part to prepare conscientious, empathetic, knowledgeable, and savvy future thinkers and doers.

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